

A

# REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

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Thursday, May 1. 1712.

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**I** Am now to speak to the State of the *Dissenters* in *England*, and if Providence would be pleas'd to open their Eyes, they might bear *what this Babler says*, as the *Wise Ones of Athens* said to *St. Paul*, and make some Use of it to their own *Advantage*; perhaps they will despise the *Tale* for the *Teller*, and serve him as the *Elders* did the *Blind Man*, *cast him out*, with that *Saying*, *Thou wast altogether born in Sin, and doest thou teach us?* As if the *Truth* suffer'd from the *Contemptible Author*; that *God*, who *Ordained Praife out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings*, could not appoint *Intrusion* from a *Sin-*

*ner*; or that *He*, whose *Wisdom* is seen in his *least Creatures*, could not teach this *Self-wise Age* from a *worse Fool* than the *Author of the Review* —.

But whether they will bear, or whether they will forbear, I, that have learn'd to meet their *Contempt* of me with a *Compassionate Sincere Desire* to serve their *Interest*, will not refrain from speaking; perhaps what the *Obstinate Farbers* despise, the *Wiser Posterity* may be the better for.

The *Dissenters* of *England* stood some Time ago in a double Capacity, as *Whigs* and as *Dissenters*: Since the late Occasional Bill, I think their Affairs have a different

rent Situation: The *Dissenters* and the *Low-Church*, till then, had but one Interest; it is apparent now, their Interests, *tho' not opposite*, are yet Independent of one another, *at least in many things*; the *Low-Church* Men began this Separation; 1st. In their forsaking the *Dissenters*, who thought themselves *inseparably United* to them before: 2dly. In Joining with a Party, who were the profest'd. Enemies of the *Dissenters*; 3dly. In Cementing their New Friendship with *Tories*, at the Expence of the *Dissenters*.

I do not, *nor would I say* the *Dissenters* ought to join against the *Low Church*; no Man shall have that Pretence against me; but *this I say*, that in their Capacity of *Dissenters*, they can no more join with them, as entirely as they did before, *nor with any other Party*; It is therefore Time that their Independent Condition were made to Exist of itself, and that such Concert of Measure, was enter'd into, as might render the *Dissenters* a firm united Body of Men; whose Figure should always be so Considerable, as at least to preserve their Interest, if they were able to have no other Influence: I desire leave to explain myself.

Hitherto the *Dissenters* have been the Property of the *Low Church*; they, the *Dissenters*, were made Tools to their, the *Low-Church*, Interest; on the Foot of their Numbers in Voting; of their Cash in Lending, of their Weight in Publick Credit, and *the like*; the late Ministry rais'd themselves to, and maintain'd themselves in their great Stations, preserv'd their Elections in *Parliament*, Overthrew the Tackers, and kept themselves in their Posts, *let us Examine the Return* — They, the Ministry, appear'd as Friends, and obtain'd the Distinction of *Whigs* — But did not the *Dissenters* themselves complain of its being but an Appearance of the Advancement of *Tories* under them? Of the Ministry being *Tory* in their Heart; Did they not give them therefore the Title of *Modern Whigs* only, and profess not to expect any Thing farther, than consilidated with Party-interest, *nor that*, any

longer than they, the *Dissenters*, stood by it.

As they expected then, so it appears now, and the Faithful Disinterested *Dissenters*, who stood *hard and fast* for the Court *Whigs*, hated every body they oppos'd, embrac'd every body they recommended, rejected all Terms, all Accommodation with their *Opposers*, and would have liv'd and died with them; are sold and betray'd, made over and Surrender'd, to carry on an Interest, which it is apparent, they, the *Whigs*, had not kept up without them, the *Dissenters*, and cannot restore now they have left them.

What, now, have the *Dissenters* to expect from Parties? Or what have they got by meddling with Politicks for the last Ten Years? I think it is Time for them to look to their Circumstances now, *as Dissenters*; and as to their being *Whigs*, let them resolve to act as Occasion shall serve: The more Independent they are on either Side, the more Formidable they may, in Time, be to both; it is not in the Nature of their Case ever to be *Tories*, much less *Jacobites*; but if the *Whigs* Interest should ever want another Revolution, I would, indeed, have the *Dissenters* always oppose *High-Flyers*, *and they must do so*, but I hope they will never come in upon Honour again, and be Tools to a Party again, that shall just make a House of Office of them, and leave them souler than they found them.

It is tool'd in our Memory, when King James would have made the Rosement of the *Dissenters* the Engine by which to pull down the *Church of England*, we cannot forget what Vows the *Church-Men*, both *High* and *Low*, then made to us, to keep us *fast*, and what Temper they promised, if the *Dissenters* would join them then: *Durft S* — *I have cast his virulent Filth out against the *Dissenters* then?* No, the *High Church Clergy*, whose Talent of *Disimulation* was then in full *Exercise*, would have pull'd him out of the *Pulpit* with their own Hands: Read their *Whining*, *Fawning*, truly *Canting Sermons* on that Occasion: many of them are still to be

be seen, and are standing Monuments of their Hypocrisie, all tending to shew how small the Difference was between the Church and their *Dissenting Brethren*; the Dialect is well chang'd since that; how needful it was for all Protestants, to Unite in Charity, if they could not in Opinion; how easie a Reconciliation might be, and how inseparable their Interest was: The Low-Church Men were made Tools of the High-Church, to enforce this Delusion, and to enlarge in Vows and Promises to the *Dissenters*; and thus the Net was spread, and the Fools were caught in the Snare most easily.

And what was the Snare? Mistake me not, I shall make it out: It is not that I reckon the Revolution the Snare; that I would have had the *Dissenters* have join'd with King James, and have taken off the Penal Laws and Test, No, no, I thank God, I was of Age then to bear my Testimony against that, and to Affront some of those that were of that Opinion.

But I would have had the *Dissenters* have acted like Men of Sense, Men that had known and remembred how they had been used for 27 Year before; and not have suffer'd themselves to have been drawn in, to take a bare general Mob Engagement, for a Particular of that Consequence; I would have had them made just and reasonable Conditions with the Church-Men, which had they not been Fools, and some others Hypocrites, had been done, not the Low-Church Men only, but the High-Church also, for they equally wanted the Revolution, would have given you any Terms, Schools, Academies, Places, you might have had it all under Hand and Seal, they could not have deny'd you at that Time.

But unhappy foolish Believers! that ventur'd your Religion and Liberty upon a Parole of Honour, when you might have secur'd it by Treaty and express stipulation, the Work was done, a general sort of an Exemption was obtain'd, which we have liv'd to bear them refuse the Name of Toleration to, and not a *Dissenter* had either the Brains to consider, or the Thought to see

the want of the least Provision for their Posterity, either the Instruction of their Children, or Succession of their Ministry.

In all the Low-Church Administration, in all the Friendship shewn by them to the *Dissenters*, in all the Services the *Dissenters* did them, in all the need they stood in of the *Dissenters*, What did they ever do towards making us easie, either in our Schools or Academies, much less in that abominable Impostion, which has now effectually blown the *Dissenters* all up? Nay, was not many of the *Dissenter's* Ministers and School-Masters Ruin'd and Impoverish'd by vexatious Prosecutions, even during a Low-Church Administration? And could they obtain the Favour to be kept easie, even while the Government Carest'd them for their Money, and the Low-Church Men Carest'd them for their Votes, and while neither knew how to act without them.

What then have the *Dissenters* now to do? To turn *Tories*! No, no, as when I Argued against giving the Monarchy of Spain to the Emperor, the Malitious and Envious would have it, that I was for giving it to France, than which nothing could be more Absurd or Injurious; so now, that I would have the *Dissenters* be no longer made Fools, neither to Moderns or Ancients; if any Man suggests I would have them fall in with *Tories* or *High-Fliers*, such are either Foolish or Wicked, let them take it which Way they will, as the Coat fits them.

But I am for the *Dissenters* retiring to their safe Entrenchments, sent'd round by the Laws of God and Man, and Retirving the just Charter for their Father's land, of Conscience, not Politick *Dissenters*; and if ever their Interest in Civil Affairs comes to be wasted, they may then make a better Disposition of it, than they have ever yet done.

The Law now pass'd upon the *Dissenters*, has been a Blow to their Politick Interest, but none at all to their Religious Interest; the Religious Interest of the *Dissenters* faithfully adher'd to, will not fail to restore their Political Interest; but had the Prosperity

sperity of their Politick Interest, gone on, as in the last Years it has done, I think verily their Religious Interest had sunk entirely; wherefore, tho' I look on the Treatment they have receiv'd from Enemies Unjust, and from Friends Ungrateful, and a great Blow to them, as Whigs, yet, like

the Toleration in Scotland, it has not answer'd the End of the Party that brought it on, and I am persuaded no Thanks to Man, it shall still turn to the General Advantage of the Dissenters, as Dissenters, and this is what I am now coming to.

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